

exigencies in affairs of a temporal or civil nature, as far as a difference of circumstances will admit; the general assembly having therefore taken the premises into serious consideration, and conceiving themselves indispensably bound to secure and preserve the same equality of rights, privileges and advantages, to all quiet and inoffensive christian societies in this state, without any exception, whereby religion may be encouraged and diffused, and peace, order and universal tranquillity prevail, have agreed to enact,

SEC. 2. *And be it enacted*, That in every christian church, or society or congregation, of whatsoever sect, order or denomination, now known, or which shall at any time hereafter be known and acknowledged in this state, and protected in the free and full exercise of their religion by the constitution and laws of the same, there shall be and remain sufficient power and authority in all the male persons above twenty-one years of age belonging to any such church, society or congregation, to elect, at their discretion, certain sober and discreet persons, not less than five or more than thirteen, which persons, so elected, shall be and are hereby constituted a body politic or corporate, upon being registered as herein after directed, to act as trustees, in the name and behalf of the particular church, society or congregation, for which they are respectively chosen, and to manage the estate, property, interest and inheritance of the same, in the most upright and careful manner, and shall moreover have perpetual succession in law, fact and name, as herein after prescribed, and shall, by their name of incorporation, have full power and lawful authority to sue and to be sued, to implead and to be impleaded, to answer and to be answered unto, in any court or courts of law or equity within this state, before any judge or judges, justice or justices, in all manner of suits and pleas whatever, and of what nature or kind soever such suits, pleas or actions may be, in as full and effectual a manner as any other person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, may or can do.

Certain persons incorporated in every christian church.

This act confirmed by November, 1809, ch. 139, the words 'by the general assembly of Maryland,' in the enacting style, having been omitted.

SEC. 3. *And be it enacted*, That every such body politic shall be chosen, and the succession kept up, at such times and places as are ordinarily used for public meetings of the said church, society or congregation, and by such persons as are allowed to have a voice in the management and direction of congregational or temporal concerns, according to the known custom and usage of their respective denominations; or the said body politic or corporate shall be chosen, and the succession kept up, according to the rules, regulations and practice, that may have been heretofore adopted and used, or that shall be at

When and where every body politic shall be chosen.